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A SERMON

PREACH'D in the

PARISH CHURCH

OF

St. *Martin-Ludgate*,

October the 10th 1714.

BY

WILLIAM WHITFELD, Rector,
Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

At his Leaving the said PARISH.

LONDON,
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A

SERMON

PREACHED in the

CARMELITE CHURCH

OF

St. Mary's-Lodge,

BY

WILLIAM PENFIELD, Rector,
Chaplain to Calvary Commandery.

TO THE

INHABITANTS

OF THE

PARISH

OF

St. *Martin-Ludgate*.

IF *This Farewel-Diſcourſe may be thought to be of uſe, and to do Good amongſt any of my Friends; I gladly take this Opportunity of gratifying your Requeſts, by leaving it with you in Print; deſiring to be remember'd by it, with that kind Eſteem I have always receiv'd from you: And that it may recall to your Minds many Sermons, which I have preach'd upon the ſame Subjects, that are here only hinted at.*

The Compaſs of one Diſcourſe from the Pulpit could not contain all the neceſſary Doctrines and Duties, which I have preach'd to you in the Courſe of my Miniſtry. I have here ſpoken to ſeveral, which I judg'd moſt needful to leave imprinted on their Minds.

One thing indeed, thro' the ſhortneſs of the time allotted to me, I perceive to be omitted; which is the admoniſhing you againſt Immorality and Prophaneneſs. But conſidering that this was generally my Subject on every Lords Day, when the Act of

Parliament

Parliament was conſtantly read in our Church; and that my earneſteſt Exhortations to them who bore Office in the Pariſh, were never wanting, for their putting that Law in Execution; there was the leſs need of my ſpeaking here to this Point. And there is, I bleſs God, a better Reaſon, in that there are but few (none I hope of any Rank) amongſt you, who do diſtinguiſh themſelves by theſe ſcandalous Sins.

And when all is done, a true Faith, and conſtant Perſeverance in the Worſhip of God in our Eſtabliſhed Church, (for which you of this Pariſh have more Opportunities than moſt others) are the ſureſt Foundation of an Holy Life, and the beſt Security againſt Impiety.

As therefore I have always made thoſe Doctrines and Duties, which do beſt conduce to this End, the chief Subject of my former Sermons, ſo I deſir'd to leave them recommended to you, in that which was to be my LAST; That ſo you and I may receive the End of our Faith, which is the Salvation of our Souls. *You, by your knowing, and doing; and I, by my having faithfully declared unto you, thoſe Things which are moſt neceſſary to obtain it. For which you ſhall always have the Prayers of*

Your Faithful Friend

and Servant,

William Whitfeld.

PSALM CVII. 43.

Whoſo is Wiſe, and will obſerve thoſe Things, even they ſhall underſtand the Loving Kindneſs of the Lord.

THeſe Words are a Concluſion drawn from a great Variety of Inſtances throughout this Pſalm, whereby the Redeemed of the Lord, are exhorted to praiſe him, from the Obſervations of his manifold Providences, which are viſible to every one, that will but obſerve as a Rational Creature ought; and were more eſpecially evident to the *Jews*. Such were his Mercies and Preſervation to them, in their wandring in the Wilderneſs, hungry and thirſty, and their Soul fainting in them. Such was his Deliverance and Redemption to them from their Captivity, when they ſat in Darkneſs, and in the Shadow of Death; being bound in Affliction and Iron. Such is his Fatherly Goodneſs in the State of Sickneſs; when our Soul abhorreth all manner of Meat, and we draw near to the Gates of Death.

Moſt of us I believe, have had our Tryals in ſome Inſtances or other, of Danger and Affliction; and all of us are obnoxious to them every Day of our Lives. The *Jews*, which were delivered from their Calamities here rehears'd, are called the *Redeemed of the Lord*: For in the Concluſion of every one of them, it is noted of them, that they cried unto the Lord in their Trouble, and he deliver'd them out of their Diſtreſſes. They cryed unto the Lord; for who, beſides this Preſerver of Men could deliver them? And He did deliver them; becauſe His Mercy and Goodneſs (as well as His Power) is infinite.

Now this *Experience* of God's Mercy, (one wou'd think) ſhould be always in our Minds, and ever before our Eyes; but alas! We are forgetful of our greateſt Good. 'Tis therefore with an unuſual Patheticalneſs repeated by the Pſalmiſt, at the End of every one of theſe Deliverances (a ſtanding Reproof to us, if we ſhall neglect and forget God our Deliverer,) *oh that Men would praiſe the Lord for his Goodneſs, and for his wonderful Works to the Children of Men*!

Were I to exhort you, (my Beloved Brethren) in theſe laſt Words, which I am this Day to ſpeak unto you, as your Miniſter in Jeſus Chriſt, with Relation only to the Bleſſings and Mercies of this preſent Life, it ſhould be in theſe Words of my Text, (with which the Pſalmiſt concludes all his Obſervations of Gods manifold Providences, Protection and Deliverances) *Whoſo is Wiſe, will ponder theſe Things, and they ſhall underſtand the Loving Kindneſs of the Lord.* But they that are not

Wiſe,

Wiſe, will neglect, forget, and not obſerve them. And theſe are the *Fooliſh Men*, which the Pſalmiſt ſays, *v.* 17. *ſhall be plagued for their Offence, and becauſe of their Wickedneſs.*

But becauſe I propoſe now to inſiſt chiefly on thoſe things, which do more immediately relate to your Spiritual Welfare, and your Eternal Happineſs after this Life; I will do it in the ſame manner, that the Pſalmiſt here uſeth about Temporal Bleſſings; by calling to your Remembrance ſome things of the greateſt Conſequence that are paſt, and have made up no inconſiderable Part of my Miniſtry, during the ſpace of very near Twenty Three Years, wherein by the Grace of God, I have preached the Goſpel amongſt you.

For I am not now to ſpeak unto you any new thing. I have frequently preach'd over again the ſame Sermons, in the courſe of my Miniſtry, with ſome little Additions; in confirmation to my ſelf, that the Doctrines deliver'd in them, were true and laſting, and never to be changed; and with Regard to you, as knowing the *Neceſſity* of their being frequently inculcated.

We do not therefore (as the Apoſtle ſaith, 2 *Cor.* VI. 1.) *begin again to commend ours; or the Effects of our Miniſtry unto you; nor to lay again the Foundation of Repentance from Dead Works; and of Faith towards God*, Heb. VI. 1. This Work hath been formerly done, frequently repeated, and I truſt, effectually perform'd. If it hath not, 'tis too late for me now to begin, or for you to learn: My Preaching hitherto hath been in vain, and ſo hath your Faith alſo been in vain. They that have not

treaſur'd up the Word of Life, and receiv'd the Good Seed (ſo often and long ſowed by me,) into honeſt and good Hearts, I can have have but very ſlender Hopes of them, that they ſhould now do it.

But, as the *Dying* Man, who thro' the courſe of his whole Life, hath been an Example of Virtue and Juſtice, and true undefiled Religion; and a conſtant Preacher of Righteouſneſs, and of all that is good, to his deareſt Friends and Relations; finds it neceſſary, ſtill to perſiſt in that Duty, even to his lateſt Breath; and then eſpecially to ſummon up all his Strength, that he may add the greater Force to his former Precepts, in thoſe things, whereon he conceives their chiefeſt Good to depend; that at leaſt, his laſt Words, (as I have always admoniſh'd you to do, on your Death Beds) may make a more laſting Impreſſion upon thoſe who ſhall hear them; ſo give me leave, to recollect in ſhort ſome of thoſe Duties, which have been the frequent Subjects of many Sermons, and wherein 'tis my Judgment, that your Eternal Happineſs is chiefly concern'd.

And this indeed, hath been very much upon my Mind, in thoſe late Sermons which I have here preach'd, ever ſince I had the near Proſpect of being removed from you. As particularly of the Judgments of God, upon daring impenitent Sinners, on occaſion of the dreadful Fire of *London*: I pray God to avert thoſe, which do now threaten us, in other kinds of Vials of his Wrath! So likewiſe, the inevitable Danger of a Death Bed Repentance; too much ſhall I ſay relyed upon, or

rather

rather the only miſerable Refuge, left to inconſiderate Men? In my Sermon the laſt Lords Day, I ſhewed you the ſureſt and only way, of obtaining God's Bleſſing upon your ſelves and your Families, in your Dealings in this World. And on the Day before the King's Entry, I proved to you out of Scripture, the Neceſſity and Meaſures of your Obedience to our Governors, with Regard to our dutiful Subjection to his preſent Majeſty.

Add to theſe thoſe Duties and Doctrines, which throughout the whole Courſe of my Miniſtry, I have with great Frequency and Earneſtneſs inculcated; and I truſt, that I may with a good Conſcience ſay with St. *Paul*, Acts 20. 26. *I take you to record this Day, that I am pure from the Blood of all Men. For I have not ſhun'd to declare to you all the Counſel of God.*

But, (as I have ſaid,) that I may recapitulate to you in ſhort ſome of thoſe things, wherein I have chiefly laid the main Streſs of all my Preaching; in which your own Eternal Wellfare, (and the Account which I muſt render to Jeſus Chriſt, the Great Shepherd of Souls,) is more immediately concern'd.

And this ſhall be with Reſpect { To Chriſtian Doctrines. / To Religious Duties.

As to both of which, I take this Opportunity to declare before Almighty God, and this Congregation; that upon the ſtricteſt Enquiry into my own Heart, and the Review of thoſe Sermons, which (as I ſaid before, I have more than once preached amongſt you,) I do not find any thing in the leaſt erroneous or contrary to the Word of God,

God, or not warranted by it. May God in his Grace, ſupport me in the Confeſſion of that Holy Faith, at the Day of my Death, which I have conſtantly preach'd amongſt you! Judge me he will according to my Sincerity in preaching it. May God in his infinite Mercies through Jeſus Chriſt, pardon me my own Failures, in thoſe things which I have inſtructed you and my ſelf in! But I am fully perſwaded in my Conſcience, (and I rely upon his Holy Word for the Direction of it) that no one ſhall ever miſcarry in his Salvation, from his believing any Doctrine, that I have from this Place ſet forth, or performing any Religious Duty, as neceſſary to it. If he doth, be the Loſs of his Soul, upon my own Head!

I will deſcend to ſome Particulars, whereby you your ſelves may the better judge of this Aſſertion.

1. I have never fail'd with all Freedom and Plainneſs, to declare unto you my Judgment, of any Heretical Errors, which I thought of Danger to our Common Salvation; according to the time of their Exaltation, when they ſeem'd to threaten moſt Danger. By which Rule, I have (in its Seaſon) inſiſted much upon the Idolatry and Superſtition of the Church of *Rome*. I have always declar'd againſt Perſecution in the Cauſe of Religion, whether it come from Papiſts, or from Proteſtants. I have proved from the Word of God, the great Sin of *Schiſm*, in our own Separatiſts; and the Iniquity of that once prevaling Cuſtom amongſt ſome, of receiving the moſt Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, occaſionally only, and out of ſecular

ſecular Regards. I have ſhewed you the wild Errors of Enthuſiaſts; and of thoſe more eſpecially, who deny the Lord who bought them, and do not only diſuſe, but treat with Contempt the bleſſed Sacraments, inſtituted by our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, in his Holy Church. At the time, when thoſe fiery falſe Prophets of late ſet up themſelves, by denouncing God's heavieſt Judgments upon this City, and utter Deſtruction to all, that would not follow them; I ſhew'd their Deluſions, and (without the Spirit of Prophecy) eaſily and readily foretold, that the Vanity and great Impiety of their monſtrous Predictions (and moſt impudent Pretenſions to greater Miracles, than ever our Saviour perform'd,) ſhould come to naught, and evidently prove to all Men, their own Falſehood. The greateſt of all Errors, (as I take it to be in the Chriſtian Faith,) that of Antinomianiſm, which of late Years is too much prevailing; which affirms that Chriſt hath done all for us, and that nothing now remains for us, as a neceſſary Condition of Salvation, not even Faith it ſelf; hath been very much in my Endeavours, to diſprove from the Word of God; by expounding to you the Covenant of Grace; the great Mercies of God, in ſettling our Salvation upon thoſe Terms, which are revealed in Scripture, whereof Jeſus Chriſt is the Mediator and Surety. I have ſhewed you, not only that Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, is a neceſſary Condition of this Covenant; but alſo, that according to the Doctrine of the Articles of our Church, (and the Tenor of the whole Goſpel,) that that is not a ſaving and

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lively Faith, which doth not bring forth its Fruits of good Works; of true Piety to God, and Charity to Man.

It was neceſſary, (in order to preſerve you ſtedfaſt in the true Faith,) to oppoſe theſe kind of Errors, which are deſtructive of it. Not that I took Delight in theſe, or any other Controverſies whatſoever. It hath always been contrary and vexatious to my own Natural Temper, to enter into any Diſputes. But it was the Duty of my Holy Function, by which I was engaged at my Admiſſion into the Prieſthood, *to be ready with all faithful Diligence, to baniſh and drive away all erroneous and ſtrange Doctrines, contrary to God's Word.* Which I have therefore thus far perform'd; but not unmindful of the Charity of the Goſpel, which forbids all railing Accuſation. Nor yet taking upon me the Power and Authority (which belongs to God alone,) of denouncing Eternal Damnation againſt any that differ'd from me in Opinion; even in thoſe Points, which nevertheleſs I judg'd by the Word of God, to be neceſſary to Salvation.

2. As to thoſe *Doctrines* and *Duties*, which in Oppoſition to theſe and other like Errors, and in Conformity to the Doctrine of the Goſpel, and of our own eſtabliſhed Church, I have endeavour'd to prove the Truth of; and to convince you of the Neceſſity of your believing one, and performing the other.

1. In general, All the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, as they are compriz'd in that which is called the Apoſtles Creed; and in thoſe Two larger

larger Expoſitions of it, the Nicene, and that ſtyled the Athanaſian Creed.

Let it not be thought by any of you, indifferent to your Salvation, how, or what you do believe. That which God hath revealed, (as I think, I have often ſufficiently prov'd of ev'ry one of theſe Articles, in my courſe of Preaching and Catechiſing,) it is our Duty to believe, and to receive with all ſtedfaſt Faith in our Hearts, and to make a publick Confeſſion of, with our Mouths. This Profeſſion was made in our Names, by our Sureties in our Baptiſm. This publick Confeſſion is required of ev'ry one of us, by our Church, whenever we are aſſembled in the publick Worſhip of God. Of this the Apoſtle admoniſheth, *Rom.* 10. 8. *The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart:* i. e. *the word of faith which we preach. That if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs, and with the mouth confeſſion is made unto ſalvation.* And our bleſſed Saviour ſaith, *Mark* 16. 16. *He that believeth and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved. But he that believeth not, ſhall be damned.*

I need ſay no more, to ſhew the abſolute neceſſity of your believing whatſoever God hath revealed. And if I have prov'd much, and often to you, that all theſe Articles are revealed in the Word of God, nothing doth more nearly concern your eternal Salvation, than your ſtedfaſt belief, and your firmeſt Confeſſion of them, againſt all Oppoſition. And let not, that craſty Atheiſtical cavil, ever ſhake your

Faith, that many of thoſe things which we do, and are required to believe, are above our Underſtanding to comprehend. For ſuch, all God's Works and Counſels are, and muſt needs be. Whatſoever God hath declar'd, we do believe, and no further. The thing done, or to be done, we ſtedfaſtly lay hold on, becauſe God hath revealed or promiſed it. The manner in which it was done, or ſhall hereafter be perform'd, we are ignorant in, and may ſafely be ſo; becauſe it is no where revealed. The Incarnation of our Bleſſed Saviour in his taking the Manhood into God, we are by this means aſſur'd of; and ſo likewiſe of the Reſurrection of our own Bodies at the laſt Day; tho' we ſhall never comprehend the Incomprehenſible Myſtery of the one; nor ſhall we know the Power and Manner of God's raiſing the Dead, till the Day of the Reſurrection.

2. In particular therefore, I have (amongſt others) very much inſiſted upon the Vindication of this great Article of the Chriſtian Faith, the Divinity of our bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer Jeſus Chriſt God and Man, againſt them who of late have ſo very much, and ſo boldly oppos'd it. For I look upon this to be the very Foundation of all our Hope and Faith; and that the Chriſtian Religion is built upon this Confeſſion in our Articles, that Jeſus Chriſt is of the ſame Subſtance, Power and Eternity, with God the Father. If He be truly God, He cannot be otherwiſe. If He be not God, He cannot ſave; He cannot forgive Sins; His Blood cannot be of infinite Value and Extent. If he be only Man,

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(though the greateſt Prophet that hath, or ſhall come into the World,) wherein doth the Chriſtians Faith, differ from the Mahometans?

Errors and Differences of Opinions in other matters, wherein our Salvation is not neceſſarily and immediately concern'd, have not been ſo much in my thoughts, or the Subject of my Sermons to you. I have more chiefly and frequently inſiſted upon thoſe Holy Duties in our Religion, about which there is none, or but little Controverſy amongſt Chriſtians; which yet are very much neglected by too many, though it be to the great hazard of their Salvation. Yet in the religious and conſtant performance of theſe, Believe me my Beloved Brethren, conſiſts your beſt Preſervative againſt all manner of Hereſies and Etrors; and from thence, do Iſſue, the Streams of all that good Grace which is to build you up in the Lord; which alone can make you true Believers, and Holy in your Loves; and can give you any manner of Comfort at your Death.

To this Purpoſe I have inſiſted very much.

1. Upon the Neceſſity of your receiving frequently the Bleſſed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. I have endeavour'd to remove thoſe unreaſonable Scruples, and to diſſipate all thoſe groundleſs Fears, by which, too many are kept from the Holy Table. I have often explain'd to you, the true meaning and intent of this bleſſed Sacrament, both to its outward and viſible Elements, and alſo as to its inward Grace. I have often ſhew'd and expounded to you, wherein that juſt Preparation doth conſiſt, which ſhall make you worthy Communicants;

that is, (under an humble Senſe of your great Sins, with a ſincere Repentance, and unfeigned Reſolution to forſake them, and with a true Faith in the Blood of Chriſt,) ſuch, as God ſhall accept, through his Mercies in his well-beloved Son.

I have ſpoken ſo very much, and ſo very often upon this Subject, that nothing remains further to be ſaid. It hath pleaſed Almighty God, ſo far to bleſs my Endeavours, in inforcing this Duty, that the Sacraments in this Pariſh-Church (in Proportion to the bigneſs of it,) are generally, as I have been told, much fuller than in any other Place.

And Oh! That God wou'd now open my Lips, and give me that Power in theſe my laſt Words, which I am to utter unto you from this Place, as might be of force to enter them into your Hearts! To prevail with all good Chriſtians, to be conſtant and frequent, in their performance of this, the greateſt of all Religious Duties; and to reach the Hearts of all thoſe, who have not yet been touch'd! But what Hopes alas! Of this Succeſs, from a few Words juſt at my departure, with them, who have ſtood out obſtinately againſt my Sermons, Expoſitions, and moſt earneſt Exhortations, for ſo many Years together! Nevertheleſs, I ſhall not ceaſe to Offer up my humbleſt Petitions to Almighty God, (as I have admoniſhed you to pray for them, whom ye ſhall ſee to go out of the Church, and to turn their Backs upon their Crucify'd Saviour, when the Holy Sacrament of his Body and Blood is to be adminiſter'd;) that by his Grace, they may return to a better Mind, and not neglect ſo great Salvation.

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2. In your Devotions at the publick Prayers, which are Offer'd up to Almighty God, Twice every Week-day, and Thrice every Lord's-day, in this Church; I have endeavour'd to perſwade you (all that I can) to be the better, and to do ſome Good to your own Souls, ev'ry time that ye come to the Houſe of God, which is the Houſe of Prayer. And that you wou'd make it, truly to be ſo, to your ſelves, by being Serious and Intent at your Devotions, and by uſing that known Poſture at your Prayers, of kneeling upon your Knees; as I have ſhew'd you, our bleſſed Saviour and his Apoſtles, the Prophets, Patriarchs and Saints of God, are recorded to have done in Holy Scripture. That ſo, when you ſhall come to Examine into the State of your Souls, with reſpect to your Hopes of Salvation, ye may receive ſome Comfort from the Reflections, of your having been often Proſtrate at the Throne of Grace, in Confeſſion and begging forgiveneſs of your Sins; and that, for your indevotion and careleſneſs in the Service of God, even that which ſhould have been a Bleſſing to you, may not be added to your Iniquities; and that ye be not bound under that heavy Prophetical, Curſe of the Pſalmiſt, to have your Prayer turn'd into Sin. What then, can be for a Bleſſing and Mercy?

There is no Spiritual Satisfaction, that can more Affect a pious Chriſtian, on this ſide Heaven, (or perhaps more delight the Bleſſed there,) than to ſee and joyn with a Congregation of the Faithful, humbly, devoutly, and earneſtly, Offering up their Prayers and Praiſes, in the Name, and for the Sake, of the ever bleſſed Jeſus. And there is nothing more Offenſive

fenſive to any Holy Mind, and turns more to Popery, and to other Errors, than to ſee the Service of God prophan'd by Unholy Men, regardleſs of their own Spiritual Welfare; but not without doing Miſchief, to that of their Bretheren. And laſtly, there is nothing ſo Ominous to our reformed Religion, and ſo dangerous towards removing the Goſpel from us, as when you ſhall ſee this Indevotion to raiſe up its Head, and to prevail in our Churches. Wherever therefore ye do ſee it, let me always beſpeak your Charity, to pray for them, whom your Eyes ſhall behold, not praying for themſelves: At leaſt that they may not involve our Church, in their Ruine.

As ye deſire to edify, and be the better for the Sermon ye ſhall hear, beg the Grace of God, moſt earneſtly, before, and after it. If ye wou'd Examine your Souls, whether you have ſanctify'd the Lord's-day aright; Begin, and end the Account, by recollecting what Truth, Faith and Devotion, hath been in your Minds, at the publick Prayers of the Church. Always lay the Foundation of all your hopes of God's Bleſſing upon you, in the enſuing Week, in the ſincerity of your Prayers on the Lord's-day; And in your grateful Acknowledgment, (in Praiſes and Thankſgivings,) for his Mercies and Preſervation in the Week paſt: Ever remembring, that judicious Obſervation, of a very excellent good Man, that if he had ſpent the Lord's-day well, (in all the publick and private Duties requir'd,) God always bleſs'd and proſper'd him accordingly, in the Week following. As you deſire God's particular Mercy and Protection,

to

to be over you in your own private Families, and his Bleſſing upon your juſt Dealings in your lawful Profeſſions; never omit the conſtant Duty of Family-Prayer, to bring down his Bleſſing upon you. If you wou'd humble your ſelves for any great Sin, or beg of God any particular Grace, neceſſary to ſtrengthen and ſupport you, againſt the Temptations of the World, the Fleſh and the Devil; ſhut thy Door, and betake thy ſelf to the Prayers of the Cloſet. *He that ſeeth, and heareth in ſecret, ſhall reward thee openly.*

3. *Forſake not the aſſembling of your ſelves together*, in the publick Service of the Church, *as the manner of ſome is*, is the Admonition of the Apoſtle to the *Heb.* X. 25. *i. e.* Forſake not the Church of Chriſt; leave not this Church, which is Eſtabliſh'd here amongſt us, for any other Communion whatſoever. For, that this is the pureſt, and moſt Apoſtolical Part of the whole Catholick-Church, may be evinc'd, not only from its true Goſpel-Charity, purity of Doctrine and Worſhip; but even from the Confeſſion of our greateſt Adverſaries; who all agree, that the Church of *England* is the beſt, and the pureſt, next to their own. From which Confeſſion, that which they all allow of as the beſt next to theirs, hath the general Approbation of all Churches, (before all others whatſoever,) except of that particular one, which takes the Pre-eminence to it ſelf.

As I have already ſaid, we of this Church, do never denounce the Sentence of Damnation, upon any ſorts of Men, or Sects of Chriſtians whatſoever. And this is the Charity of the Goſpel, which

which hopeth all things; hopeth even againſt Hope. Nevertheleſs, we lawfully may, and evidently do Condemn them who diſſent from us, of many groſs and dangerous Errors. If we are in the Right, in thoſe things wherein we do differ from them, 'tis not only a falſe Charity, but againſt Truth, to ſooth and ſpeak well of their Errors. A too great Tenderneſs to any Hereſy, may prove a Snare to the Faithful. We are not therefore backward either to Charge the Romaniſt with Idolatry, or the Separatiſt with Schiſm. And we know that no Errors, if wilful, heady, and preſumptuous will be excus'd; and that Schiſm, (that is a cauſeleſs ſeparation from the Church of Chriſt,) hath the Nature of a very crying Sin. As to Charity to Men's Perſons, their Wants and Afflictions, (even of our greateſt Enemies,) I underſtand that very well, to be a Goſpel-Duty: But I know of none due to their Errors, otherwiſe then a general Compaſſion for Human Infirmities, from the inward Senſe we have of our own. But Firmneſs in Religion, is a Duty we owe to God, to Truth, and to our own Souls; which to relax or depart from, is either Weakneſs or Prevarication, never Charity.

I have not Time, or elſe I would ſpeak largely, of a pretty conſtant, and very laborious Exerciſe, which I have generally gone through, in expounding the Church-Catechiſm, both publickly and privately, in the Time of *Lent*, as far as my Health and Strength would permit. They that have receiv'd any Benefit from my Pains and Inſtruction, will not need my repeating now, what they then heard, and do ſtill, I hope remember, to their Souls Good.

Good. They that have neglected thoſe Opportunities, may perhaps be better adviſ'd, to lay hold of others, under the Miniſtry of my worthy Succeſſor, who is ſent to you by our Excellent Biſhop, (from his own Experience of him,) endued with all holy Inclinations, and with better Abilities both of Body and Mind, to be your Faithful Paſtor; and to lead you into the true way of Salvation.

As for My-ſelf, My Beloved, you have had the Flower of my Bodily Strength, in my Miniſtry amongſt you for Twenty Three Years. But my Mind I hope is improv'd, my Paſſions abated; and my Spiritual Knowledge encreaſed, for God's Service in another Church, from the Experience I have had in the Performance of my Duty in this.

As for any Good, that I may be thought, or flatter'd to have done amongſt you; I wiſh that it had been much (very much) more. I ſhall Pray for its Encreaſe.

But I Fear, and know, that I have much greater Reaſon to humble my ſelf before Almighty God, for my Neglect, and ſundry Omiſſions of my Duty. If even the Bleſſed Apoſtle St. *Paul* had reaſon to Fear, leſt, whileſt he Preach'd to others, He himſelf ſhould become a Caſt-away, what can be my Hopes, but in the Mercies of God, through Jeſus Chriſt, for the forgiveneſs of my Sins!

Whatever of Good therefore hath been done, or intended by me, let God have the Glory, and me (his Sinful Servant,) his Pardon, and Forgiveneſs! But in moſt of this, I cannot in Gratitude, omit my Acknowledgments to you, My Pariſhioners, for all

your readineſs to concur with me, and to encourage me in many good Works. In your giving freely to the Honour and Glory of God, for the Repairing and Adorning this Church, in the Decency 'tis now in: In your Contributions to Charity-Schools, and to the Propagation of the Goſpel in Foreign-Parts: In your Liberality to Poor Houſe-Keepers; and towards providing a Fit, and ſecure Burial-Place for the Dead. In your bearing with my Infirmities; and giving Me your Encouragement and Aſſiſtance, whenever I deſir'd them, towards any thing that tended to the Glory of God, or the Good of Men.

From hence it is, that ſome neceſſary Reproofs, I have been forced to give, (not ſo well ſavour'd at ſome times) have thro' your Eſteem of me, no ways tended to my Diſquiet. From hence it is, that I have enjoyed a perpetual uninterrupted Peace and Good Will, amongſt you. *Peace*, a *Goſpel-Duty*, of the greateſt moment betwixt a Miniſter and his Pariſhioners! without which all his *Preaching* or *good Living*, will have but very little Effect.

And I mention this, not without an eſpecial Regard to the Memory of a very excellent good Pariſhioner, lately deceaſed, whoſe Knowledge and Experience of many Years in the Buſineſs of this Pariſh, and his great Integrity, deſervedly gave him that Authority, which he always had amongſt us whilſt living; and now that Reſpect which is due to his Memory.

Mr. Thomas Siſſon.

As

To conclude in a Word. As I have ſpoken of the Truth of my Doctrine, ſo let me with your leave, of the Juſtice of my Dealings amongſt you, in the Words of *Samuel*. *Behold here I am, witneſs againſt me before the Lord,----whoſe Ox have I taken? or whoſe Aſs have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppreſs'd? or of whoſe hand have I receiv'd any Bribe?*

I have no more to ſpeak, but in the Words of my Text, and of the Holy Apoſtle St. *Paul*, with which I will end.

Whoſo is wiſe, will ponder theſe Things which I have ſaid, and they ſhall underſtand the loving Kindneſs of the Lord.

Be ye therefore ſtedfaſt, my Beloved Brethren, and unmoveable; always abounding in the Work of the Lord, foraſmuch as ye know, that your Labour is not in vain, in the Lord.

And ſo, I commend you all unto God, and unto the Word of his Grace; which is able to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance among all them, which are ſanctified.

FINIS.